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Fate and John Payne Have A Date Sooner or Later

New York — John Payne figures that one of these days he is going to get lucky. All it will really require is for him to slow down and back into a niche called timeliness.

Payne is presently touring theaters in the East in "Calculated Risk." He has just finished a successful engagement at the Mineola Playhouse, prior to opening at the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey.

But Payne's big interest is production. And he had had a lot of good ideas, none of which has panned out, as follows:

• In 1958 Payne's production company had all Ian Fleming stories on option. "I had read 'Moonraker' and I got very excited about the James Bond character. But I couldn't get anyone else interested," Payne said ruefully.

• Payne's next project was a series about a lawyer who specialized in maritime law, and escaped from his job on a luxurious yacht. "But people kept telling me no one was interested in lawyers."

• Next he went to Washington to speak to Allen Dulles, then

head of the CIA, about access to some of their more dated files. "I think it would be very comforting to Americans to know that there is a vast organization engaged in protecting them. But that idea never got off the ground."

• Then, while recovering from the severe automobile accident that nearly took his life, John devised — as a result of information gleaned from the CIA — a series called "The Weapon Masters."

"There is an outfit in Boston that is 20 years older than the Revolution, and their job is to obtain for clients information on any subject from anywhere in the world. Using that as a basis, I devised an espionage factory idea with seven people, all experts in different fields of electronics, science and weaponry, who research and work for the government.

"At the time there was no interest. Now, so many shows of the general type are scheduled, that it's too late. One of these days," Payne added, "fate and I are going to meet at a street corner."